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175* must have become ingrained in the Slavic vocabulary before
177 400 A.D., and made their entry into the common speech prior
197 to the spread of the Southern Slavs into the Balkans, which began about a century later.

175* While for 200 years the Goths were the dominant ethnic element in southern and western Russia, they constituted only a numerically inferior ruling class which controlled the Slavic natives and such Iranian elements as were left from the period of Scythian and Sarmatian supremacy. It would otherwise be difficult to explain the process by which the Goths disappeared completely from the steppe country during the two centuries after the overthrow of the Gothic kingdom by the Huns in 370. The Huns themselves were a Turko-Tartar tribe whose western movement, begun in the first century A.D. after 300 years of strife with the Chinese in southern Mongolia, brought them to the Caspian Sea in the second. They were a nonagricultural nomadic people possessed of little culture of their own. What civilization they exhibited, and particularly their military organization, they borrowed from their Sarmatian vassals. Some of the Ostrogoths joined the advancing Huns. That portion of the Gothic population which had settled in the Crimea, though also subjected to the Huns, disappeared more slowly, and some small remnants preserved their Gothic identity as late as the eighteenth century. While the authority of the Huns does not appear to have been oppressively exercised in the steppe country, it nevertheless dealt a fatal blow to the flourishing civilization composed of combined Oriental and Greek elements which had adorned the north shore of the Black Sea for nearly a millennium. The Huns were the last Asiatic people to impinge upon the eastern section of the Slavs before their dispersion and expansion.

613 The primitive social organization of the early Slavs is, it must be admitted, a highly controversial subject. An exclusively patriarchal and tribal organization is found, after all, only among purely nomadic peoples, but is immediately re-

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solved as soon as peoples become fixed, in consequence of the necessity of integrating nonkindred elements into the social complex. The originally kindred groups become contaminated with extraneous elements, though still conceived as fictitious clans or tribes. When we first encounter the Slavs, they are mostly beyond the nomadic stage, and the most primitive social unit preserved among a Slavic people in historical times is the western Serbian *Zadruga*. This characteristic family community is probably, like the Indian "joint family," a remnant not merely of Slavic but of common Indo-European antiquity.

As far as we can judge from historical survivals, the basic social unit among the early Slavs was a rural community consisting of a certain number of persons of common descent, together with outsiders who acquired membership by marriage or adoption. Its head was either its senior member or an elected chief, and direction might even devolve upon a prominent widow. The chief represented the group in external relations and directed its economy, though in serious matters he was subject to the joint decision of its membership. Collectivity of goods prevailed; the whole fortune of such a unit, together with the individual earnings of its members, belonged to the group, and could not be disposed of without common consent. Membership in such groups might run as high as over a score of households. Fields, woodland, and similar landed appendages were common property, but pasturage might be particularized. Where trade and barter became matters of vital interest (as was the case very early on the Russian watercourses), primitive towns seem to have been the creation of ambitious groups who sought a convenient point for defense or trade and then proceeded to expand their possessions and influence by the acquisition (peacefully or by violence) of adjacent interesting territory. On the other hand, patriarchal relationships might persist even in these centers. Tribal complexes such as we later encounter among the Russian Slavs derived from the union of various family units with remote ties of kinship and might attain a membership of several thousand souls. The